



NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION OFFICE

Ms. Joan Manke, Executive Secretary

POWERS, DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS

The implementation of the Neighborhood Board system began in 1972, when Honolulu voters approved an amendment to the Revised City Charter, Article XIV. The amendment called for the formation of a nine-member Neighborhood Commission to develop a Neighborhood Plan to assist in implementing the formation and operation of elected neighborhood boards on Oahu. The purpose was to provide a mechanism to increase and assure resident participation in the process of government decision-making. Administrative and technical staff provided through the Neighborhood Commission Office would support the mandated functions of the Neighborhood Commission and the neighborhood boards.



FY 2005 – 2006 HIGHLIGHTS

Neighborhood Commission Office

Neighborhood Commission's Kapolei Office – NCO staff has co-located and now have office space on the third floor of Kapolei Hale in order to better serve the Leeward and Central neighborhood boards. The co-location of the staff office ensures that the boards and the general public have equal access to Neighborhood Commission staff. It also reaffirms Mayor Hannemann's commitment to fully utilize Kapolei Hale and encourage the private sector to make use of the planned second city of Kapolei as a viable alternate location for offices.

Audit of the Neighborhood Board System – Pursuant to Resolution 04-387 adopted by the City Council, a performance audit of the Neighborhood Board System was conducted and completed in August 2006. The report examined various concerns and pertinent issues related to the neighborhood board system and offered recommendations to improve the system's performance and effectiveness in serving the community. The audit was viewed as a positive baseline from which the neighborhood commission can review progress and measure success.

2007 Neighborhood Board Elections – Board members are elected for a two-year term. Planning is currently underway for the 2007 elections in which all 444 board seats on the 32 boards will need to be filled.

Training – With the help of the Managing Director's Office and the State's Office of Information Practices, three sunshine law training sessions were conducted for neighborhood board members and commissioners of City agencies on July 28 and August 29, 2005 and again on March 16, 2006. All Neighborhood Assistants also participated in a "Minute Taking" workshop in December of 2005.

Neighborhood Commission

Neighborhood Plan – During fiscal year 2006, the Neighborhood Commission's Neighborhood Plan Committee continued its comprehensive review process of the 1998 Edition of the Neighborhood Plan. Plans are to schedule and hold public hearings for discussion of the proposed amendments by the end of 2006.

Formation of a Permitted Interaction Group – This Group was formed to consider the findings and recommendations of the Office of the City Auditor in its extensive audit of the neighborhood board system.

Attendance at Neighborhood Board Meetings – Commission members have continued to attend monthly neighborhood board meetings to observe and to better understand the needs of neighborhood boards.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION OFFICE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

With positive direction from the managing director and cooperation from corporation counsel in reviewing numerous issues with legal implications, the Neighborhood Commission Office provided administrative and technical support services to the Neighborhood Commission and the Neighborhood Boards. The office also facilitated their City Charter-mandated functions to increase and assure effective citizen participation in the decisions of government.

The office operations are divided into two major and interdependent sections to strengthen operations and services: 1) Community and Elections Services which supports 32 neighborhood boards and the conduct of their biennial elections, and 2) Administrative and Office Services, which serves the commission and the boards, and provides communication and training services as well as housekeeping and office services. The duties and accomplishments of the office operations are expanded upon in the following sections.

Neighborhood Board Field Services – Accomplishments of our field staff included:

1. serving as the primary liaison between the boards, the Neighborhood Commission, and the city, state and federal governments,
2. providing documentation of board activities by producing and filing of meeting agendas, attending, recording and distribution of meeting minutes, and completing the written and oral requests generated by official board action,
3. Providing technical information on proper meeting procedures, city policies and programs, and
4. assisting in producing and distributing publicity materials to enhance two-way communication with neighborhood residents.

Administrative and Office Services Activities – The administrative staff coordinated and serviced all regular and special meetings of the Neighborhood Commission. Substantial staff support and technical assistance was provided to the commission during complaint hearings and any and all public hearings relating to the neighborhood boards' more complex issues.

Section staff coordinated the fiscal expenditures for each neighborhood board through its centralized purchasing and accounting functions. Individual monthly statements were prepared for all 32 neighborhood boards to apprise each board of the status of its operational, publicity and refreshment appropriations. In addition to assisting with the preparation of the commission's annual operating budget, this section services the nine-member commission and handles all fiscal, personnel and property inventory matters.

The administrative staff also supports the Mayor's Representative Program working with the Managing Director's Office. The mayor's representatives are members of Mayor Mufi Hannemann's cabinet who attend board meetings to provide information as well as respond to community concerns by board members and residents at each neighborhood board meeting. Questions and concerns which need research are then forwarded to the appropriate departments by NCO. They are monitored to assure responses are received by the departments in time for the mayor's representatives to discuss at the following board meeting.

Training and Educational Programs – Training and educational programs serve a vital function in providing basic skills and essential technical information to assist board members to effectively perform their tasks.

In October 2003, Council-initiated Ordinance 03-30 amended Chapter 3 of the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu by adding a new Article 12, requiring sunshine law training for elected neighborhood board members. The ordinance requires that *"any board member whose date of taking office is after July 1, 2004 shall participate in the sunshine law training program within three months from the date of taking office."* Sunshine law training was initiated when the new administration began with the help of the Managing Director's Office and the State's Office of Information Practices. Three sunshine law training sessions were conducted this fiscal year for neighborhood board members and commissioners of city agencies on July 28 and August 29, 2005 and on March 16, 2006. In addition to these sessions, formal training was also conducted on the following subjects:

- A workshop on Minute Taking and Formatting was conducted on December 21, 2005 in which all Neighborhood Assistants were in attendance. The workshop was designed to increase the skills and professionalism of all Neighborhood Commission office staff.
- A special Sunshine Law training session was held on December 12, 2005. The sessions were specifically conducted for the individual board Chairs. Proctored by Les Kondo of the State Office of Information Planning, they were to

increase awareness and educate the board Chairs in attendance on the intent of the open government law to protect the people's right to know and allow public participation.

Public Awareness – In order to broaden public awareness of the Neighborhood Board system, as well as a part of its function as a city agency, administrative staff worked closely with Olelo in the development of listing neighborhood board meetings on public cable television. One of the more popular venues to view their neighborhood board in action, each board has tried to accommodate videotaping of their meetings within their individual Annual Budgets.

Web Site – Our active web site requires regular updates by staff to maintain the abundance of Neighborhood Commission information. The web site includes individual board web sites with agendas and minutes going back through 2001, as well as boundary maps for each board and board photos. Agendas and minutes for the Neighborhood Commission are also included as well as commissioner and board member directories, calendars of monthly board meetings, office staff and mayor's representatives contact information and their board assignments. The Revised Neighborhood Plan, including proposed revisions, links to the Neighborhood Board Discussion sites, and election results for the elections of 2001, 2003, and 2005 can also be found on this site. Our NCO newsletter *Ho'ike Lono* is also posted on the web along with answers to Frequently Asked Questions and pictures of various events. In an effort to improve our access as well as cut costs, this web site includes a link to sign up for automatic e-mail of agendas and/or minutes for boards and the Commission.

Communication - In an average month throughout FY 2006, extensive communication-related services provided by staff allowed our neighborhood boards and the Neighborhood Commission to reach thousands of residents and households, including government officials and organizations. Circulation of a monthly calendar of events, agendas and minutes continues to be a valuable outreach mechanism to routinely publicize activities of Oahu's neighborhood boards and the commission in a timely manner.

Additional services involved the production and distribution of newsletters, surveys, flyers, posters, brochures, and certificates. Coverage of information and publicity press releases, publication of legal notices, writing related correspondence and technical reports were also a part of the NCO's accomplishments.

Board surveys were distributed to identify neighborhood needs and to solicit neighborhood opinions. These served as tools to guide boards in setting priorities and recommendations. Survey results were subsequently communicated to neighborhood residents as well as proper officials and other government departments and agencies.

NEIGHBORHOOD BOARDS

All 444 board members are volunteers and serve as advisory groups to the Honolulu City Council, Mayor Hannemann and the City Administration and to departments, agencies and other public officials of the state and federal governments. Oahu's neighborhood boards function as an island-wide communication conduit, expanding and facilitating opportunities for community and government interaction. The Revised Neighborhood Plan, developed by the Neighborhood Commission, serves as the legal framework for the neighborhood boards.

Board Activities

Our neighborhood boards are encouraged to provide their community an opportunity to express its needs and desires in the delivery of government services, including services provided by government, economic development and land use matters. The neighborhood boards were engaged in a variety of activities which included:

1. Listening to presentations and making recommendations on zoning and variance applications and permits and land use proposals, discussing its impact on the community, including traffic impacts, and submitting recommendations. Reviewing and making recommendations in support of a mass transit project, Bus Rapid Transit, bus routes and other municipal transportation needs, including bikeways, highway beautification projects and communicating traffic and highway concerns;
2. Raising concerns related to parks and making recommendations for park uses to include cultural and heritage uses, tot lots, bark parks and night closures;
3. Reviewing and setting priorities on the Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) proposed by the City and recommending a list of proposals reflecting the needs of individual neighborhood communities;
4. Reviewing and making recommendations to the Honolulu City Council, Hawaii State Senate and House of Representatives.

In their role as neighborhood-based communication channels, the boards sponsored forums to hear platforms of political candidates and presentations from many organizations and associations. Other boards had special guest presentations on issues and concerns or projects that will affect all of Honolulu. Presentations included proposals for mass transit, development plans for Mauuwai and Queen's Rise on the Ka Iwi Coast, Kawela Bay development, Wailupe Mauka Cluster housing, Franciscan Vistas residential care community, University of Hawaii, Frear Hall dormitory renovation and many others.

Environmental issues such as the many pending sewer projects, flood damage during February and March of 2006, water rights issues, graffiti task force, erosion and sinking of Likelike Highway were also part of many board agendas during FY 2006.



Waianae Neighborhood Board #24

Waikiki Neighborhood Board #9



Community residents brought issues before the boards that were more personal and impacted the quality of their neighborhoods. Some issues were recreational in nature such as the Cambell Industrial Raceway Park, Kahalu'u Canoe Halau, Central Oahu Regional Park, along with many other park issues. Many land and zoning issues arose such as Waikiki re-development, planned housing, and the proposed rail transit system. In partnership with HPD, boards also participated in community activities to improve the quality of their neighborhoods. Neighborhood Watch groups, sign waving with HPD for Community Traffic Awareness Program (CTAP), involvement with Weed and Seed, Community Policing and Drug Abatement and Awareness programs were just a few of the many ways that the boards supported their individual communities.

Residents island-wide were able to view the following neighborhood board meetings on television on a delayed basis: Ewa Beach, Hawaii Kai, Kalihi Valley, Kailua, Manoa, North Shore, Palolo, Pearl City, Waianae Coast, Waimanalo, and Waikiki. Videotaping board meetings through arrangements with Olelo (cable television) continued to be a popular venue to stimulate public interest.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

The Neighborhood Commission was officially established in 1973, after Honolulu voters approved a revision of the Revised City Charter, Article XIV. All nine members are appointed volunteers who serve in staggered five-year terms. Four of the Commission members are appointed by the Mayor, four are appointed by the City Council, and the ninth member is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. One of the Mayor's appointees and one of the City Council appointees as well as the ninth member of the Commission are required to have served one full term on a neighborhood board.

In addition to developing a Neighborhood Plan, which serves as the legal framework for the neighborhood boards, the commission is responsible for the review and evaluation of the Neighborhood Plan and the neighborhood boards. The City Charter mandates the commission to assist areas of the city, upon request, in the formation and operation of their neighbor-

hoods and neighborhood boards. The commission is required to meet six times within a year to review and evaluate the activities, performance and operations of the neighborhood boards.

Members of the Neighborhood Commission during fiscal year 2005-2006 were as follows:

Grant Tanimoto, Chair	
Sylvia Young, Vice-chair	Bernard Kaahanui
Clara Y. Ching	Jeanette Nekota
Robin Makapagal	Sheila Apisa
Edward E. Gall	Kalene Sakamoto

Commission Summary

This fiscal year the commission continued to meet on a regular basis. Their meetings were well attended by board members. Commissioners conducted several complaint hearings on neighborhood board operational inconsistencies, improper board meeting procedures and publication notices. The commission also voted to review and establish policy on the complaint process.

The commission successfully addressed the quorum concerns of the Kalihi-Palama neighborhood board by increasing awareness of the issue within the community and actually offering to transport members to the monthly board meeting. The Kalihi-Palama board may now formally acknowledge all concerns brought before them.

Two permitted interaction groups were formed within the commission to help to expedite two pressing issues facing the commission. The first group was established to continue review and revision of the 1998 revised neighborhood plan. This group met most Saturdays to move towards completion of a final draft. The draft will then be presented to the charter commission and also for public hearing. The second permitted interaction group was formed to consider the audit recommendations of the Office of the City Auditor. The audit report examined pertinent issues related to the neighborhood board system and offered opinions to improve the system's performance and effectiveness in serving the community. While many issues have already been addressed, the group still continues to focus on better ways to involve more effective citizen participation regarding government decisions.